

## Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 PC-10 USIA-15 IO-14 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SAM-01 AGR-20 INT-08 COME-00 FDRE-00 DRC-01 /158 W

----- 094331

R 071230Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2531

INFO AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, SWEL, CM

SUBJECT: AFDROUGHT- CAMEROON DROUGHT SITUATION

AFDROUGHT

REF: (A) YAOUNDE 0334; (B) YAOUNDE TOAID A-08

1. SUMMARY. FOLLOWING MINPLAN LETTER AND AMBASSADOR/RDO MEETING WITH DAOUDA AND OUSMANE MEY RELHRTED REF (A), AND DOCUMENTS FORWARDED REF (B), PURPOSE THIS MESSAGE IS TO COMMENT THEREON AND BEGIN CONSIDER MOST APPROPRIATE MEANS FOR DEALING WITH GURC PROPOSALS AS THEY MAY EVOLVE. END SUMMARY.

2. DROUGHT CONDITIONS IN NORTH CAMEROON HAVE BEEN OF GROWING CONCERN TO GURC. LAST MAY WHEN WE DISCUSSED POSSIBILITY OF A CONFERENCE TO STUDY PROBLEM OF DETERIORATION OF SUBSISTANCE BASE IN ARID ZONE (STATE 95825) MINISTER OF PLAN SHOWED FULL AWARENESS OF LONGER TERM PROBLEM AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR NORTH CAMEROON (YAOUNDE 1801). HE SUBSEQUENTLY ATTENDED OCT. 1973 CILSS MEETING IN OUAGADOUGOU AS OBSERVER AND COMMENTED TO AMBASSADOR THAT CAMEROON, ALTHOUGH NOT A MEMBER, SHARED PROBLEM OF SIX SAHEL STATES. HOWEVER THERE WAS NO VISIBLE

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INDICATION THAT GURC WAS MOBILIZING ITSELF TO TACKLE PROBLEM

ON AN URGENT BASIS.

3. DECISION TAKEN AT LCBC SUMMIT MEETING IN EARLY DECEMBER TO DECLARE ENTIRE LCB ZONE A DISASTER AREA WAS FIRST REAL INDICATION THAT GURC GIVING MORE SERIOUS ATTENTION TO PROBLEM (YAOUNDE 3990). LCBC DELEGATION VISITED UN AND WASHINGTON LATER IN MONTH TO SENSITIZE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES TO NEW SITUATION. HOWEVER IT WAS NOT UNTIL EARLY JANUARY THAT ANY SPECIFICS OF NEEDS WERE PUT FORWARD, AND THIS WAS INFORMALLY AND ON INITIATIVE OF AN EXPATRIATE TECHNICAL ADVISOR IN MINISTRY OF PLAN WHO HAD DISCUSSION WITH RDO ON JANUARY 11 (MEMCON FORWARDED AFRAQCWR. ON JANUARY 23 MINISTER OF PLAN SENT LETTER TO RDO GIVING GENERAL OUTLINE OF NEEDS FOR WHICH GURC WOULD BE SEEKING ASSISTANCE FROM PROSPECTIVE DONORS. (SIMILAR LETTERS SENT TO UNDP, FAC, AND, PERHAPS, OTHERS). MEETINGS WITH DAUDA AND OUSMANE MEY ON JANUARY 26 PRODUCED SOME FURTHER DOCUMENTATION WHICH HAS BEEN FORWARDED TO WASHINGTON (REF. B).

4. WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ON WHY GURC HAS UP TO THIS POINT PLAYED DROUGHT SITUATION IN LOW KEY. IN PART PRESIDENT'S ADVISORS MAY HAVE BEEN HOPING THAT CROP AND RAIN SITUATION IN NORTH WOULD PROVE MORE FAVORABLE THAN PREVIOUS YEAR AND MEET SHORT TERM PROBLEM; THEY MAY LIKewise HAVE RECOGNIZED THAT PROBLEM IN NORTH HAS NOT ATTAINED DRAMATIC NATIONAL PROPORTIONS THAT IT HAS IN SIX SAHEL COUNTRIES. RELATIVE SILENCE OF PRESS NOT SIGNIFICANT. PRIVATE PRESS IS UNIMPORTANT AND UNENTERPRISING AND COVERAGE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN RELATIVELY ISOLATED NORTH IS GENERALLY MINIMAL EXCEPT INsofar AS GOVERNMENT MAY WISH TO FOCUS ATTENTION THERETO. GURC GENERALLY SEEKS AVOID GIVING PROMINENCE TO UNFAVORABLE DEVELOPMENTS UNTIL READY TO TAKE REMEDIAL ACTION. PRESIDENT MAY ALSO BELIEVE IT POLITIC NOT TO PLAY UP SPECIAL NEEDS OF NORTH TO AVOID RECRIMINATIONS THAT HE IS SEEKING FAVORED TREATMENT FOR REGION OF HIS ORIGIN.

5. THUS WE CONFRONTED WITH FOLLOWING FACTS:

A) NORTH CAMEROON IS AFFECTED BY DROUGHT AND INCREASINGLY SO;

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B) THERE IS GROWING SHORT TERM PROBLEM OF UNDETERMINED MAGNITUDE AS YET, AND A LONGER TERM PROBLEM;

C) GURC IS NOW DIRECTING MORE ACTIVE ATTENTION TO THESE PROBLEMS;

D) SIGNIFICANT EXTERNAL FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES BECOMING AVAILABLE FOR SUDAN-SAHEL ZONE WILL STIMULATE

GURC EFFORTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES  
TO MEET ITS DROUGHT PROBLEMS;

E) IN VIEW SIMILARITIES BETWEEN NORTH CAMEROON AND REST  
OF SUDAN-SAHELIAN ZONE, AND NECESSITY OF SHARING WATER  
RESOURCES IN SOME CASES (E.G. LOGONE RIVER, LAKE CHAD)  
IT ONLY LOGICAL THAT MANY OF DROUGHT PROGRAMS SHOULD EMBRACE  
NORTH CAMEROON AS WELL;

F) GURC ABILITY MAKE EFFECTIVE USE OF ASSISTANCE ENHANCED  
BY RELATIVELY WELL IMPLANTED AND FUNCTIONING GOVERNMENT  
MACHINERY.

6. CHANNEL WHICH GURC SHOULD USE FOR PRESENTING ITS REQUIRE-  
MENTS AND PROPOSALS TO DONOR COMMUNITY PRESENTS MAJOR PROBLEM.  
LCBC APPROACH SEEMS LOGICAL AND COMPATIBLE WITH REGIONAL/MULTI-  
DONOR TERMS OF REFERENCE UNDER WHICH WE SUBSTANTIALLY OPERATE.  
WE QUESTION HOWEVER WHETHER LCBC CAN ORGANIZE ITSELF TO DEAL  
WITH LARGER DROUGHT PROBLEM WITHOUT STRONGER SUPPORT FROM ITS  
MEMBER STATES AND STRENGTHENING OF ITS SECRETARIAT (STAFF)  
RESOURCES.

7. NATURE OF GURC PROPOSALS, WHEN ELABORATED, MAY WELL  
DICTATE MOST APPROPRIATE MECHANISM FOR DEALING WITH THEM IN  
LARGER REGIONAL FRAMEWORK. WE HAVE IN MIND EXPLORING SUBJECT  
FURTHER WITH LOCAL FAC AND UNDP REPRESENTATIVES, UNLESS  
WASHINGTON HAS ANY OBJECTIONS OR OTHER SUGGESTIONS.

8. PLEASE ADVISE.  
MOORE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, DROUGHTS, PROPOSALS (BID)  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 07 FEB 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** MorefiRH  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974YAOUND00386  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** YAOUNDE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740247/aaaabske.tel  
**Line Count:** 145  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION AID  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** (A) YAOUNDE 0334; (B) YAOUNDE TOAID, A-08  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** MorefiRH  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 27 AUG 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <27 AUG 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <04-Sep-2002 by MorefiRH>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** AFDROUGHT- CAMEROON DROUGHT SITUATION AFDROUGHT  
**TAGS:** EAID, SWEL, CM  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005